

Records of the White-backed Swallow in the South-West.—The White-backed Swallow (*Cheramoeca leucosterna*) is stated in the *Handbook of the Birds of Western Australia* (Serventy and Whittell) to avoid the South-west forested area but to be found in the Northam district. It may be of interest to record that I saw two of these swallows at Muresk on September 10, 1950.

—E. L. CARTHEW, West Perth.

While travelling from Perth along the Albany Highway on January 15, 1950 I saw a pair of White-backed Swallows near the 80-miles peg (between Bannister and Williams). The country hereabouts is thickly timbered.

—DON REID, Wembley.

Introduced Snails.—V. N. Serventy (*W.A. Naturalist*, vol. 2, 1950, p. 119) records the Dune Snail (*Cochlicella acuta*) on Point John in the Point Peron area.

I located this species near the track just to the north of Shoalwater Bay in 1939. Prior to that year I have no record of the species in the Point Peron area.

V. N. Serventy suggests that *Helix pisana* may have been transported from Bunbury to Pemberton on rail trucks. I have frequently noticed large numbers of *H. pisana* congregated under rail trucks left standing between the jetty and railway station at Bunbury and have assumed that these snails were frequently conveyed considerable distances by rail. That the species is not more widely distributed is probably due only to the fact that *H. pisana*, like *Cochlicella acuta*, does not appear to thrive except in maritime situations.

I found *Helix pisana* frequent on Garden Island in 1939.

—ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Leonora.

Food of the Bustard.—On a recent trip to a station near Yalgoo I was on the spot, one evening, when a lubra from the native camp shot a Bustard or Wild Turkey (*Eupodotis australis*). In the interests of natural history I commandeered the erop, thereby causing much speculation and banter among the native population. Upon examination of the contents, the following items were revealed as making up the bird's diet:—

150 Large green and black caterpillars.

50 Ground weevils (*Leptops biordinatus*), about 1 in. in length.

10 Ground weevils (*Cubicorrhynchus* sp.), about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in length.

35 Millipedes.

15 Pebbles, all white quartz, one weighing at least 4 oz.

A quantity of seeds and green herbage.

The erop weighed well over a pound.

I had collected 12 species of ground weevils in considerable numbers that day, and what puzzled me was the fact that there were only two of them represented in the erop contents. These

two species must have had some appeal to the bird as it could have had its fill with many of the other species I had collected.

—R. P. McMILLAN, "Glendearg," Bejoording.

Inter-species Relations in Birds.—On May 21, 1950, Dr. D. L. Serventy and myself noticed two King Parrots (*Purpureicephalus spurius*) chasing a third parrot which proved to be a Smoker (*Polytelis anthopeplus*). The Smoker, though it appears to have been seen for the first time in the Murray district at least ten years ago, has not increased in numbers. Most years odd birds are shot in the orchards and small travelling flocks of about half a dozen birds are seen at times. Another recent arrival, the Elegant Parrot (*Neophema elegans*) has on the other hand been quite numerous some years. Did the above little episode of the King Parrots and the Smoker denote that the Smoker's status in the district was still that of a stranger?

This is an interesting question as every summer Ground Cuckoo-Shrikes (*Pteropodocys maxima*) visit the farm and are generally attacked on their arrival by Butcher-birds (*Cracticus torquatus*) and sometimes Magpies (*Gymnorhina dorsalis*). Why do Magpies and Butcher-birds attack owls and frogmouths? Is it because they are seldom seen and are treated as strangers, or is it because they resemble hawks? Is the Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*) attacked as a stranger or because other species of birds realise its evil designs on their nests?

Some of what appear at first sight to be attacks by one species of bird on another species are often play. Magpies often chase Pipits (*Anthus australis*) and other birds in what would appear to be brutal attacks, yet the next second the Magpie is tired of the game and the victim chases the attacker. Of course there are numerous records of Magpies killing other birds but I think in most cases, if not all, it is unpremeditated.

—ANGUS ROBINSON, Coolup.

Smoker-Magpie Relations at Lower Chittering.—In view of Mr. Robinson's note above it may be of interest to report an observation made by Mr. W. H. Loaring and myself at Lower Chittering on September 1, 1950. On a tree were perched four Smokers and two Magpies, the two species being apparently indifferent towards each other. Smokers were plentiful in the district and Mr. Eric Schmidt informed us that the species is now to be found throughout the year at Lower Chittering. It would appear, therefore, that the Magpie and other resident species no longer consider it a stranger and accept it as a regular component of the local bird community.

Mr. Robinson's views are of great interest. Such behaviour would constitute additional impediments to the colonisation of new areas by stray wandering birds (cf. the attacks on immigrant Indian Crows reported in the *W.A. Naturalist*, vol. 2, 1950, p. 81).

—D. L. SERVENTY, Nedlands.